

September 22, 2002 by Steve Brandon



# The Teaching of Jesus Christ - Enter by the Narrow Way

## Matthew 7:13-14

### 1. The Destinations

### 2. The Crowds

### 3. The Gates

### 4. The Paths

### Where are you going?

Have you ever been on a long trip to a familiar place? Perhaps you frequently travel to the same vacation spot each year, to the college you attended or the college you attended, or to your grandmother's house? When you get close to your destination, you begin to recognize road markers along the way. Perhaps it is a large hill that you climb and just after the hill, you can see your destination. Perhaps it is one particular bend in the road, that opens up so that your destination is before your eyes. When you come to these spots, there is great anticipation at what awaits you. I remember growing up and travelling to grandma's house in Clinton, Illinois. When we were close enough to see the water tower, we knew that we had arrived. The children would all begin to sing, "I see the Clinton water tower. I see the Clinton water tower." When we sang that song, we knew that we were coming close to the end. We have approached that place with the Sermon on the Mount. We have climbed that last hill. We have turned that last corner. And the end is in sight.

Until this point, (1) Jesus describes kingdom citizens (5:3-16). They are blessed. They are salt and light to impact the world. (2) Jesus requires perfect righteousness (5:17-48). We are not merely to live up to the letter of the law, but to the spirit of the law, which is an entirely different level of living than many of us have ever thought of before. (3) Jesus explains our practical righteousness (6:1-7:12). We are called to live with God in focus at all times, both in our religious activities (giving, praying, and fasting), and in our day-to-day activities (money, worry, and judging). Today, we begin our final section, which I have entitled, (4) Jesus presents entry requirements (7:13-27).

As with any good sermon, Jesus brings together His entire message. He is ready for the grand point of application. In this instance, it is a call to salvation. It is a call to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Jesus calls us to "enter by the narrow gate" (verse 13). This morning, we will look at the verses 13 and 14, in which Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14).

Before we dive into the text, let me simply say that "salvation is difficult." One puritan theologian said, "It is no such easy thing to be saved, as many make it" (Matthew Mead, *The Almost Christian Discovered*, p. 16). Jesus says that not everyone will "enter the kingdom of heaven" (verse 21). Jesus warns that many enter the gate that leads to destruction (verse 13). Consider the following, ...

Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:23).

Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24).

Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26).

Jesus said, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27).

Jesus said, "No one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions" (Luke 14:33).

Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation" (John 16:33).

Jesus said, "because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:19).

The apostle John said, "Do not marvel, brethren, if the world hates you" (1 John 3:13).

When Paul was saved, he was told, through Ananias that He would be shown "how much he must suffer for Jesus' name" (Acts 9:15-16).

It is appointed to believers, "not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:27).

When Paul left the churches he established, he encouraged them to continue in the faith, even though it would be difficult.

He told them, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

Paul said, "indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12).

These are just a sampling of verses that describe the difficulty faced by Christians.

John Bunyan pictured the struggle of the Christian life beautifully in his allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. I trust that most of you are familiar with the perils that Christian faces along his journey to the Celestial city. When he set out on his journey, he encountered two people, Obstinate and Pliable, who sought to turn him back. Christian fell into the Slough of Despond. All along the way, there were many who sought

to turn him from his way, among whom are Mr. Wordly Wiseman, Formalist and Hypocrisy, Talkative, Mr. By-ends, Mr. Money-love, Mr. Save-all, Demas, Ignorance, and Atheist. Mr. Worldly Wiseman sought to persuade him out of his way with such words as these: "There is not a more dangerous and troublesome way in the world, than is that unto which [Evangelist] hath directed thee; and that thou shalt find, if thou wilt be ruled by his counsel. Thou hast met with something (as I perceive) already; for I see the dirt of the Slough of Despond is upon thee; but that Slough is the Beginning of the sorrows that do attend those that go on in that Way: Here me, I am older than thou; thou art like to meet with, in the way which thou goest, Wearisomeness, Painfulness, Hunger, Perils, Nakedness, Sword, Lions, Dragons, Darkness, and in a word, Death, and what not?"

I am reminded of Paul's words, "For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39). He didn't mean that these things would never come upon us. Rather, he meant that even as they come, they will not separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus. (And these are precisely the types of things that Christian encountered.)

Christian battled Apollyon with sword and shield. Christian traveled through the valley of the Shadow of Death. Christian faced the temptations of the city, Vanity Fair, where his companion, Faithful, was put to death, after a trial filled with many slanderous and false accusations. Christian had to walk by the dangerous hill called Lucre, which had a Silver-Mine, which ensnared Demas. Christian dodged the pit into which Vain-Confidence fell. Christian faced the mean, Giant Despair. In the end, Christian had to pass through the river of death, before finally reaching his journey, the Celestial City.

When John Bunyan put pen and ink together to describe the Christian life, this is how he described it. But somewhere in our American Christianity, we have developed this notion that salvation is an easy thing, which will lead to an easy life, which is filled with nothing but blessing. I have heard many describe the Christian life as a very easy thing.

Just try telling a Russian Christian, who lived in the former Soviet Union, who gave up everything in this world (his education, his reputation, his income, his property, his children, his comfort) that it is easy to be a Christian. Just try telling those Hebrew Christians, who had all of their property taken from them (Heb. 10:34) that being a Christian is easy. Just try telling the Christians in Indonesia, who have seen their churches destroyed by Islamic mobs, and who have left their homes to escape the persecution, that being a Christian is easy. Just try telling this to the Christians at the church of Smyrna, who were told to "be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Salvation is difficult and Christianity is hard.

Last century, Nathaniel Hawthorne followed up Bunyan's classic with his own allegory, entitled, "The Celestial Railroad." (You can read it here, [The Celestial Railroad](#).) In this short story, Hawthorne describes how he recently happened to travel to the City of Destruction. No longer to pilgrims need to walk arduously between the City of Destruction and the Celestial City, like in Bunyan's day. Rather, there is now a railroad, which people can get on and travel to the same place that Bunyan's pilgrims followed at high speed, with great ease and safety. On this train-ride, Hawthorne meets such fellow travelers as, Mr. Smooth-it-away, Mr. Live-for-the-world, Mr. Hide-sin-in-the-heart, Mr. Scaly-conscience, Mr. Take-it-easy, and Mr. Flimsy-faith. He meets the ministers, Rev. Mr. Shallow-deep, Rev. Mr. Stumble-at-Truth, Rev. Mr. Clog-the-spirit, and Rev. Dr. Wind-of-doctrine. He found out that the Rev. Mr. This-to-day was expected to resign his pulpit and the Rev. Mr. That-to-morrow was going to take it over.

On this train-ride, he saw many of the same places that Christian had visited hundreds of years earlier, The Slough of Despond, The Valley of the Shadow of Death, and Vanity Fair, as the railcar whizzed past them all. He saw these sights from a distance without ever going through them. The idea of the story is to show that we in our day and age, don't need to go through such difficult things as the Christians of olden days. Things are easier now, and there are other ways to the Celestial City, other than walking the path as Christian did.

Mr. Great-heart, from Bunyan's story, who was offered a prestigious job as a conductor on the train, turned it down, insisting that pilgrims travel the road on foot, considering it "a sin to travel in any other fashion." Hawthorne tells of how those on the railroad ridiculed those few pilgrims that chose to take the hard journey on the narrow road to the Celestial City. "The passengers being all comfortably seated, ... accomplishing a greater distance in ten minutes than Christian probably trudged over in a day. It was laughable while we glanced along, ... to observe two dusty foot-travelers, in the old pilgrim-guise, with cockle-shell and staff, their mystic rolls of parchment in their hands, and their intolerable burdens on their backs." Instead of a few pilgrims on the way (Christian and Faithful and Hopeful and Goodwill), there were now scores of people willing to take the easy road to the Celestial City in the luxury of a railroad car. As Hawthorne says, "Instead of a lonely and ragged man, with a huge burden on his back, plodding along sorrowfully on foot, while the whole city hooted after him, here were parties of the first gentry and most respectable people in the neighborhood, setting forth towards the Celestial City, as cheerfully as if the pilgrimage were merely a summer tour ... [with their] enormous burdens ... snugly deposited in the baggage-car" -- out of sight, out of mind.

What a difference between the two perspectives! They describe the differences very well. The character of Christianity in America has changed in our day, from the Biblical perspective. Today, Christianity is often seen today to be a nice, pleasant ride on a railroad car as the countryside passes by, rather than a strenuous, dusty walk along a narrow trail. Gone today is the talk of tribulation and distress and hardships. Here today is the talk of blessings and benefits and ease. Yet, the way of Jesus is difficult and hard.

When people asked Jesus about way of salvation, they were often challenged greatly. When the rich, young ruler came to Jesus asking, "What must I do to obtain eternal life?" Jesus told him to sell everything that he owned (Matt. 19:21). On another occasion, Jesus told one willing follower who wanted to follow Him after he first went to bury His father to follow Him now! (Matt. 8:22). Jesus' disciples "left everything" to follow Him (Matt. 19:27). Jesus told one of the leading religious leaders of the day things that confused him (John 3:9). Jesus challenged the people so hard that at one point in the ministry of Jesus, someone asked Jesus, "Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?" (Luke 13:23). His answer was in the affirmative. Jesus said, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:24). It sounds a lot like our text this morning (Matthew 7:14, "the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (Matthew 7:14).

In verses 13-14 of Matthew 7, we see two different possibilities placed before us. There are two types of people, who enter two different

gates, who walk along two different paths, who end up in two different destinations. When they reach their destination, they find a crowd of people that have all entered by the same gate that they did, traveled along the same path that they did, and ultimately arrived at the same destination that they did. One of these destinations is a good destination; the second is a bad destination.

Let's look first at ...

## 1. The Destinations

In verse 13, Jesus describes the gate and path that leads to destruction. In verse 14, Jesus describes the gate and path that leads to life. These destinations are the ultimate destinations for every single one of us. Our lives will end up in one or the other of these locations. When talking about life, Jesus is describing life in the ultimate sense -- eternal life in heaven with God, Himself. Likewise, when talking about destruction, Jesus is describing destruction in the ultimate sense -- eternal punishment in hell forever. Every single one of us will go to one of these two places.

Heaven is a place of joy and happiness. It is where life really happens, with no sin or sorrow, with no pain or regret, where everything is new, and where the whole creation will worship the Lamb of God (cf. Rev. 21:4, 5; 22:3-5). Hell, on the other hand, is a place of torment and sorrow. Jesus describes hell as a fiery place (in Matt. 5:22). Jesus describes it as a place where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30) and where "their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48). Everything that heaven is, hell isn't. Everything that hell is, heaven isn't. You think of the worst place imaginable, and I guarantee you, that hell will be worse than that. You think of the greatest place imaginable, and I guarantee you, that heaven will be greater than that. You will end up in one of these two places. It all depends upon the gate you enter and the way you travel.

Jesus often spoke about the two destinations of people. In the parable of the wheat and the tares, the tares are gathered up and cast into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:41-42). On the other hand, the wheat will enter the kingdom of their Father shining forth as the sun (Matt. 13:43). Jesus pictured the end of the age as a dragnet, which draws fish from the water, which are separated into two groups: the good fish and the bad fish. The good fish are gathered into containers (Matt. 13:48). The bad fish are thrown into the furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Jesus told the story of the Marriage Feast, where many came to enjoy the party. Yet, those who came without wedding clothes were cast into the outer darkness, where there "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 22:1-14). Of the ten virgins, half of them were prepared for the return of the bridegroom, while the other half were shut out of the wedding feast (Matt. 25:1-12). Those who were faithful with the talents they received from the Lord were given more, while those who were unfaithful with what was given to them were cast out into the outer darkness (Matt. 25:14-30). Last week, we visited Matthew 25, which speaks of the final judgment between the sheep and the goats. Jesus says, "these [i.e. the goats] will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous [i.e. the sheep] into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46).

Perhaps my tone is more serious this morning than usual, but our text this morning is serious and sober. We must grasp its realities. In fact, at one point in my preparation of this message, I was driven to my knees in seeking divine help in communicating the truths of Jesus' words. I so long to penetrate your heart with the seriousness and importance of these words.

## 2. The Crowds

Notice the two words he uses to describe the people groups. He says that there are "many" who enter the wide gate on their way to destruction. He says that there are "few" who enter the small gate and find life. You have the many and the few. Let me ask you at this point, at the end of the age, will there be more people in heaven or in hell? I was recently in a conversation with a man, who heard an evangelist speak recently, who said that God will not be outdone by the devil. Therefore, there will be more people in heaven than in hell. Having been studying this passage, I said, "I don't believe that at all!" Certainly God won't be out done by the devil. You simply need to read Isaiah 40-48 to realize God's sovereignty and supremacy in all things. But, it doesn't follow that more people will be saved than will perish eternally. Jesus says that there will be more people in hell, rather than heaven. If this isn't true, then words don't have meaning!

Many enter the wide gate. Many like the broad, easy path to which this gate leads. Many like riding in the luxury of the express railroad car. Few enter the small gate. Few know the difficult, hard path to which this gate leads. Few know the arduous hike along the narrow, dusty path.

I remember growing up and reading and hearing about the two gates in a general way, about which Jesus spoke. I always thought that they contrasted the small gate of Christianity, with the wide gate of other world religions (i.e. the Jews, the Muslims, the Hindus, etc.). Until one day, a man made a comment in a sermon one time on this text that has gripped my soul ever since. He said that Jesus here isn't contrasting people in different religions (i.e. the right religion, Christianity, with the all of the other world religions, which are wrong). Rather, Jesus is making a contrast here between those within the name of Christianity. There are those who would identify themselves as "Christians," who have entered the broad gate and are on the broad way and there are those who would identify themselves as "Christians," who have entered the small gate and are on the narrow way.

Let me show you why this is true. Look at verse 21, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven." These people, who are standing before Jesus at the judgement day are addressing Jesus as "Lord," presumably thinking that Jesus is their master. Look at verse 22, "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?'" Again, we see these people standing before Jesus and saying these things. They said that they prophesied in Jesus' name. They said that they had cast out demons in Jesus' name. They said that they performed many miracles in Jesus' name. Now, these people aren't Muslims, because they would never conceive of performing miracles in Jesus' name. Nor are these people Jews or Buddhists or any other religion. Rather, these are religious people who are doing these great religious works in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Jesus will ultimately turn them away in the judgment! This is what verse 23 describes, "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACITCE LAWLESSNESS.'"

These people think that they are on the right way in following Jesus. But Jesus demonstrates that they are on the wrong way. **Jesus says**

**that there are many who are on the wrong road!** See, there are many who are travelling upon the Celestial Railroad, thinking that they are going to arrive at the Celestial City. Yet, when they get there, they will find that they took the wrong road to get there.

Each of these two crowds have entered through a gate labeled, "Christianity," which is why they are surprised when meeting Jesus. These people will be choir members. These people will be those who have faithfully served in AWANA for years. These people will be those who have attended church their entire lives. The gates didn't say, "heaven" and "hell." Rather they both said, "heaven" on them. We ought not to be surprised at this, because Satan, Himself, masquerades himself as an angel of life (2 Cor. 11:14). Surely, Satan will also do what he can to deceive those entering in the wrong gate.

Perhaps you remember Christian's last words in Pilgrim's progress when he saw Ignorance bound hand and foot and carried away. He said, "Then they took [Ignorance] up, and carried him through the air to the door that I saw in the side of the Hill, and put him in there. Then I saw that there was a Way to Hell, even from the Gates of Heaven as well as from the City of Destruction. So I awoke, and behold it was a Dream." Ignorance had said, "I believe that Christ died for sinner, and that I shall be justified before God from the Curse, through his gracious acceptance of my obedience to his law." Ignorance had thought that he would get in by his own merits. Sure, he professed a faith in Christ, but his profession wasn't complete. He trusted in Christ's works, AND his works. He had traveled along the path of Christian religion, but trusted in his own righteousness, rather than the righteousness of Jesus Christ, alone.

Listen to Jesus' words again from Luke's account, "Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able" (Luke 13:24). We don't naturally think that there are many who seek to enter the right gate and travel upon the right way, but are not able to do so. We often think that salvation is such an easy thing that if somebody just prays a prayer or walks an isle, they are certainly upon the right path. However, in the final day, many who have prayed such prayers will find themselves cast out. When we hear of many people being converted at a meeting, for instance, we ought not to be surprised that many of these are those who "seek to enter and will not be able." Does the church today across America believe this? These are from the words of Jesus, which are often dis-regarded.

John Bunyan was once preaching in a barn, and showing how there are few that are saved. Among his hearers was a man who was learned and sought to take advantage of Bunyan's words. When Bunyan was finished preaching, this educated man told Bunyan how he was a deceiver and a person without love, and therefore, not fit to preach, because he [in effect] condemned the majority of his hearers. Bunyan replied, "The Lord Jesus Christ preached in a ship to his hearers on the shore (Mat 13), and showed that they were as four sorts of ground, the highway, the stony, the thorny, and the good ground, but those represented by the good ground were the only persons to be saved. And your position is, That he that in effect condemns the greatest part of his hearers, has no love, and therefore is not fit to preach the gospel. But here the Lord Jesus Christ did so, then your conclusion is, The Lord Jesus Christ lacks love, and therefore was not fit to preach the gospel. Horrid blasphemy; away with your hellish logic, and speak Scripture."

People don't like to hear this message today. I preach it this morning, not because I lack love, but because it is true. One day, you will find out that it is true. That day will either be a glorious day for you or that day will be the most terrible day in your life.

Let's now look at how these crowds actually get to these destinations.

### 3. The Gates

Notice once again, that there are two gates: the wide gate (verse 13) and the small gate (verse 14). There are people who have entered the gate that leads to destruction. There are people who have entered the gate that leads to life. The gate that leads to destruction is described as being "wide." The Greek word here is used in Matthew 6:5 to describe the broad street where the hypocrites like to pray, because there are many people around to see them pray. It is used in Luke 10:10 as the public place where Jesus' disciples were to go out and protest against the city who didn't receive them. The gate that leads to life is described as being "small." The Greek word here describes the narrow, tight, constricted, and the pressing-against-you way. Have you ever been on a hike in the woods and encountered an obstacle along the way? Perhaps a tree (or two) have fallen upon the path. In order to pass, you need to climb over the one and under the other. This is the narrow way. It's tight and squeezed together. I was on a canoe trip yesterday and there was one point along the river where some trees had fallen over the river. We had to squeeze our canoes under several trees, while bending over. This is a picture of the narrow way. Perhaps you parents have tried to play on some of those play-sets made for children -- the kinds with tunnels and slides. Because we are bigger than the children, the entrance into these tunnels is often quite small and we need to squeeze through it with much effort. This is how Jesus describes the gate that enters into life. It is a narrow and constrained gate.

So, you ask, "What is that gate that leads to life?" The gate is none other than Jesus Christ, Himself. Jesus, Himself, said elsewhere, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). (see verse 7 also). He also said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." We are told in 1 Timothy that there is only one mediator between God and man, "the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

So, you ask, "What makes this gate narrow?" The gate is narrow because you can only go through it when you trust in Christ alone. It isn't Christ and your goodness. It isn't Christ and your obedience. It isn't Christ and your family. It isn't Christ and your works. No. Church Family, it is faith in Jesus, alone, which can get you in. Several preachers (John MacArthur and D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones) described the narrowness of this gate to a turnstile. You can only come into this gate single-file and without any luggage whatsoever.

Many people want to add other things to the gospel, but you cannot. The early church convened a council in Jerusalem to straighten out those who wanted to add circumcision to the gospel (Acts 15), among whom were many at the church in Galatia. Some in Colossae wanted to add the keeping of Sabbaths and festivals to Christ (Col. 2:16). Some in Colossae wanted to add asceticism (i.e. self-denial) and the worship of angels to Christ (Col. 2:18, 21). Some in Corinth were adding spiritual gifts to the gospel of Christ alone (1 Cor. 12-14). When you begin to add other things to the gospel as a requirement to enter the kingdom of heaven, you have just diverted all interested parties from the narrow gate to the wide gate. There are plenty of people out there who like the person of Jesus, and who call themselves Christians, but are trusting in the work of Jesus **and** some other thing, rather than His sufficient sacrifice upon the cross. But you cannot do this. It is Christ alone, or not Christ at all. The way to salvation is very narrow.

Finally, let's look at ...

#### 4. The Paths

One path is described as being broad. The other path is described as being narrow. You can think of the broad path as the four lane highway, while the narrow path is the twisty, windy, walk through the woods. Literally, the narrow path is "pressed" upon you. It squeezes you from every side. On a walk through the woods, you are constantly in danger of getting burrs on your socks. Poison ivy or poison oak is at your feet, just off the path. Often there are trees that you need to duck around and walk over. It is a long, hard and arduous walk, up and down with many difficulties to encounter. Whereas, the broad path is exactly the opposite. It is often the way of least resistance. Along the broad road, you travel straight along and very fast. Those who build the road build it so it goes as straight and as smooth as possible. When valleys are encountered in the way, they are either filled in or a bridge is constructed. When a hill is in the way, dynamite is used to blast them away to make the road travel straight along. The one way is easy and the other way is hard. The true way is the hard way.

So, you ask, "What makes it hard?" Simply put, (1) the world, (2) the flesh, and (3) the devil. Those in the **world** around us seek to persuade us in the sinful way. It is hard to trust the words of Jesus, when all of your friends or coworkers are trying to get you to go another way. But how can we, who trust in Christ, live in any other way than the way he has prescribed for us here in the Sermon on the Mount? Our life is to be given over to honoring God in all respects. They way to do this has been laid out perfectly in this sermon. Our **flesh** naturally desires the things of the world as well. Our flesh pulls us to seek satisfaction in the here and now. But Jesus tells us not to look to the things of the world, but to the things above. We are to look to the Father to reward our prayers and provide for us. Yet, how often can our sights be set so low and focus upon the worries and trials upon the earth. The **devil** prowls about like a roaring lion, "seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). We face a spiritual battle. In Ephesians, Paul points out that our struggle "is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). The battle of our flesh in the world is how the spiritual battle works itself out.

Jesus here has presented two paths to follow in our life. This is entirely consistent with much of Old Testament imagery. Psalm 1 describes the difference between these two paths. Verse 1 says, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers. ... The LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish." The righteous are on one path, while the wicked are upon another. Moses wrapped up his ministry to the Israelites by saying, "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants" (Deut. 30:19). In Proverbs 9, we see two women calling out in the streets. The wise woman calls out, "forsake your folly and live, and proceed in the way of understanding" (Prov. 9:6). The foolish woman says, "Stolen water is sweet; and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (Prov. 9:17). The men have been reading in Isaiah of the two paths. One will trust the Lord, even in the greatest of difficult circumstances. The other will quickly turn to idols.

#### Where are you going?

Most, if not all of us in this room, are professing Christians. I ask you, which gate did you enter? Which road are you on? It terrifies me to think that there may be some in this room, who are on the wrong path! Sure, lots looks good on the outside, but on the inside your trust is something other than Jesus Christ and His righteousness alone to atone for your sins!

As a child, I remember watching the game show called, "Let's Make a Deal." I don't remember much about the game show and how it worked. I only remember that the contestants were all dressed up in costumes of some type. The host of the show would call one of these contestants from the crowd. Then, he might give him some money (say, \$50). Then, he would have some type of wrapped present in his hand, which he offer to the contestant. He would ask, "Do you want the \$50 or the present?" If the person wanted to keep the \$50, perhaps he would come with some other sort of bigger box. (Remember, this man was always trying to make a deal). Perhaps the contestant would give up the \$50 and go for the bigger box and found that it contained a motorcycle! Then, this man would bargain some more with the contestant. The contestant could keep his motorcycle or have his choice of what was behind door #1 or door #2. For the most part, the deals were some kind of known item for some kind of unknown something.

But Jesus here isn't presenting this type of unknown scenario. He is offering you life or death. This door leads to life. This door leads to death. You can take your choice. The catch is that the gate to life is narrow and the path is hard, while the gate to destruction is wide and the path is easy. Jesus has spent an entire sermon describing the narrow path. It hasn't been an easy route. So, I ask you, which road are you on? Which gate have you entered? Jesus instructs us to "enter by the narrow gate" at the beginning of verse 13.

My wife and I have purchased several posters, which demonstrates the difference between these two ways. The poster is described as "The Narrow and Wide Gates." It pictures the difference between the wide gate that leads to destruction and the narrow gate that leads to life. It has printed many Bible verses at various places in the poster to describe the various items in the picture. It is our plan to mat these posters and place them in our children's rooms that they might always contemplate the issue of the two paths that Jesus place before us today.

My exhortation to you this morning is the title of my message and the first five words that Jesus spoke, "Enter by the narrow gate!" I would beg you, for your own good, to place your faith in Jesus, who alone is able to save you from your sin. Trust in Him and in Him alone. Don't trust in anything else or anyone other than Jesus. Though the gate is narrow, God welcomes any sinner who repents of their sin and believes in Christ alone to save them (Mark 1:15). He will transform and empower such a sinner to walk the narrow path described in the Sermon on the Mount. Have you entered the narrow gate?